

**Transitioning DCS Youth with Serious Psychiatric Disorders into Adult  
Behavioral/Mental Health Services**  
([DCS Policy 19.7](#))

**Behavioral Health Transition Process Overview**

We will always rule out Employment and Community First CHOICES (ECF) first before we pursue Behavioral Health Transitions because ECF has higher benefit allotments available, if they qualify. (See DCS [Policy 19.8, Transitioning Youth to the Employment and Community First \(ECF\) Choices Program for Adult Services](#))

**Qualifications**

1. Does the youth/young adult have a diagnosis of schizophrenia, major depressive disorder, or bipolar or other serious adult mental health diagnosis? Does he/she have TennCare/BlueCare insurance? If so, he/she may qualify for the Behavioral Health Transition Program.

Note: Autism and PTSD alone would not qualify for BH, but defer to ECF Choices.

2. For most transition supportive housing locations they do have to have a stable source of income (**most often SSI**) to pay room and board for the supportive housing (Project Transitions Traditional does not always require this).

**Initial Screening**

If an FSW believes a youth in custody may be appropriate and interested in this program, please send the following documentation and information to [Allyson.D.Witt@tn.gov](mailto:Allyson.D.Witt@tn.gov) and [Delora.Ruffin@tn.gov](mailto:Delora.Ruffin@tn.gov):

- A brief summary of the current case status
- A copy of the current mental health treatment the youth is receiving
- Documentation of any SSI benefits the youth is receiving (or details of an in-process SSI application)

**Referral Process**

90 days before the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Office of Child Health will send full collected packets for the youth to BlueCare to begin the process of identifying Behavioral Health supports and potential housing, if applicable.

Once a potential placement is identified by BlueCare, the FSW will be contacted to continue transition planning for the youth.